IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application. An identifier indicating the status of each claim is provided.

Listing of Claims

1-21. (canceled)

22.   (Previously Presented) A method of receiving program information supplied on plural time-offset channels in a near video-on-demand system, comprising the steps of:

storing a segment of the program information supplied on one of said channels in a buffer memory of a receiver in the near video-on-demand system;

selecting a particular channel;

receiving the program information supplied on said particular channel; and

reading said stored segment of program information while buffering the program information supplied on said particular channel in response to the selection of said particular channel,

wherein reading of said stored segment is paused in response to a pause command while the program information continues buffering, and whereafter reading of said stored segment is resumed in response to a resume command,

wherein a second channel, time-offset from said particular channel, is selected to supply the program information if a time difference between the pause command and the resume command is greater than said time-offset, and

wherein when display of the program information is resumed after the resume command, a preselected segment of the program information immediately preceding a point at which the pause command was requested is first displayed.

23.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 22 wherein said time-offset is equal to the difference between a start-time at which said program information is transmitted on one channel and the start-time at which the same said program information is next transmitted on another channel.

24.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 23 wherein said program information supplied on said particular channel is buffered by writing said program information into a storage device and reading said program information from said storage device, said reading of said program information commencing after said stored segment of said program information has been substantially fully read, thereby seamlessly reading said program information.

25.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 23 wherein said stored segment exhibits a time duration substantially equal to the duration of said time offset.

26.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 23 wherein said one channel over which said segment is supplied and said particular channel over which the buffered program information is supplied are the same.

27.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 23 wherein the same program information is supplied simultaneously on said plural time-offset channels, and wherein the program information that is supplied on said one channel commencing at the start time of said program information and continuing until said particular channel is selected constitutes said segment that is stored.

28.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 27 wherein said stored segment of said program information is read out when said one channel is selected as said particular channel.

29.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 22, wherein said program information is a video program.

30.   (Previously Presented) An apparatus for receiving program information supplied on plural time-offset channels in a near video-on-demand system, comprising:

a storage device for storing a segment of the program information supplied on one of said channels;

a channel selector for selecting a particular channel and for receiving the program information supplied on said particular channel;

a buffer for buffering the program information received on said particular channel in the apparatus; and

a read out device for reading out said stored segment of program information while said buffer is buffering said received program information in response to the selection of said particular channel,

wherein reading out of said stored segment is paused in response to a pause command while the program information continues buffering, and whereafter reading out of said stored segment is resumed in response to a resume command,

wherein a second channel, time-offset from said particular channel, is selected to supply the program information if a time difference between the pause command and the resume command is greater than said time-offset, and

wherein when display of the program information is resumed after the resume command, a pre-selected segment of the program information immediately preceding a point at which the pause command was requested is first displayed.

31.   (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 30, wherein said time-offset is equal to the difference between a start-time at which said program information is transmitted on one channel and the start-time at which the same said program information is next transmitted on another channel.

32.   (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 31 wherein said buffer buffers the program information received on said particular channel by writing the received program information into a memory and thereafter reading said received program information from said memory, the received program information being read from said memory once said stored segment of program information has been substantially fully read out from said storage

device, thereby seamlessly recovering substantially all of said program information regardless of when said particular channel is selected.

33.   (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 32 wherein said buffer includes a hard disk drive.

34.   (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 33 wherein said storage device includes said hard disk drive.

35.   (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 34 wherein said hard disk drive includes write and read circuits operable at the same time to write to and read from the hard disk drive concurrently.

36.   (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 31 wherein said stored segment exhibits a time duration substantially equal to the duration of said time offset.

37.   (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 31 wherein said one channel on which said segment is supplied and said particular channel on which said program information is received are the same.

38.   (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 31 wherein the same program information is supplied simultaneously on said plural channels, and said segment is formed by storing said program information on one channel commencing at said start time

and then, if said particular channel is not selected by the time the start time of said program

information on said another channel is reached, replacing the stored segment of program

information in said storage device with the program information supplied on said another

channel.

39.   (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 38 wherein said readout

device commences the read out of said stored segment of program information when said

particular channel is selected.

40.   (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 30 wherein said

program information is a video program.

41.   (Previously Presented) A method of receiving program information in

a near video-on-demand system, comprising the steps of:

storing a segment of the received program information in a buffer memory of a

receiver in the near video-on-demand system; and

reading said stored segment of program information while buffering the

program information which continues to be received,

wherein reading of said stored segment is paused in response to a pause

command while the program information continues buffering, and whereafter reading of said

stored segment is resumed in response to a resume command,

wherein a second channel, time-offset from said particular channel, is selected to supply the program information if a time difference between the pause command and the resume command is greater than said time-offset, and

wherein when display of the program information is resumed after the resume command, a pre-selected segment of the program information immediately preceding a point at which the pause command was requested is first displayed.

42.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 41 wherein the received program information is buffered by writing said program information into a storage device and reading said program information from said storage device, said reading of said program information commencing after said stored segment of said program information has been substantially fully read, thereby seamlessly reading said program information.

43.   (Previously Presented) Apparatus for receiving program information in a near video-on-demand system, comprising:

a storage device for storing a segment of the received program information;

a buffer for buffering the program information which continues to be received in the apparatus; and

a read out device for reading out said stored segment of program information while said buffer is buffering said received program information,

wherein reading out of said stored segment is paused in response to a pause command while the program information continues buffering, and whereafter reading out of said stored segment is resumed in response to a resume command,

wherein a second channel, time-offset from said particular channel, is selected to supply the program information if a time difference between the pause command and the resume command is greater than said time-offset, and

wherein when display of the program information is resumed after the resume command, a pre-selected segment of the program information immediately preceding a point at which the pause command was requested is first displayed.

44.   (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 43 wherein said buffer buffers the received program information by writing the received program information into a memory and thereafter reading said received program information from said memory, the received program information being read from said memory once said stored segment of program information has been substantially fully read out from said storage device, thereby seamlessly recovering substantially all of said program information.

45.   (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 44 wherein said buffer includes a hard disk drive.

46.   (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 45 wherein said storage device includes said hard disk drive.

47.   (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 46 wherein said hard disk drive includes write and read circuits operable at the same time to write to and read from the hard disk drive concurrently.

48.   (Previously Presented) A method of supplying program information in a near video-on-demand system, comprising the steps of:

providing the same program information on time offset channels, said time offset being the same from channel to channel so that the start time of said program information on one channel differs from the start time of said program information on another channel by said time offset; and

transmitting said program information simultaneously on a plurality of said time offset channels to a receiving station so as to permit the recording of a segment of the transmitted program information in a buffer of the receiving station commencing from said start time and lasting no more than a predetermined duration that is less than the duration of said program information, and reading the recorded segment of program information while buffering the program information that is transmitted on the same channel as the segment of program information or on any other of said time offset channels,

wherein reading of said stored segment is paused in response to a pause command while the program information continues buffering, and whereafter reading of said stored segment is resumed in response to a resume command,

wherein a second channel, time-offset from said particular channel, is selected to supply the program information if a time difference between the pause command and the resume command is greater than said time-offset, and

wherein when display of the program information is resumed after the resume command, a pre-selected segment of the program information immediately preceding a point at which the pause command was requested is first displayed.

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